distribute, dispose, acquire, use or consume any quantity of wheat paddy / rice, coarse grains, sugar, edible oilseeds and edible oils and shall not require any license or permit therefor.

Decline in value of agricultural imports

3350. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, according to the latest Economic Survey, value of agricultural imports have declined during the last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have come across any shortcomings in using the credit cards by the six million farmers, who availed this facility; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) As per the latest Economic Survey, the total import of agricultural products has declined from US $ 2919 million in 1998-99 to US $ 2858 million in 1999-2000 and further to US $ 1858 in the year 2000-01. The share of agricultural imports in the total imports of the country has also declined from 6.9% in 1998-99 to 3.7% in 2000-01. The decline is mainly a result of decrease in import of cereals and sugar.

(c) and (d) The Kisan Credit Card Scheme is a hastle free mechanism for dispensation of crop loans with a validity of 3 years. The Scheme has found wide acceptability among the users. No specific shortcoming in the implementation of scheme has been reported.

However, *inter alia*, the following constraints were observed in implementation of KCC Scheme:

- Some banks, particularly cooperative banks have not been extending the facility of frequent drawls to the cardholders, thus curtailing the very basic facility extended under the KCC. NABARD immediately brought to the notice of the concerned authorities, wherever such instances were reported, to rectify the shortcomings.
- Some of the State Governments are reportedly levying stamp duty for loans under KCC and not for normal crop loans. The matter

has been taken up with the concerned State Government through State level bankers' committee.

In some of the places it has been reported that banks have been insisting for collateral security for issuing KCC. NABARD has advised the banks to strictly adhere to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines in this regard.

New drug policy

3351. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 192, given in the Rajya Sabha on 1st March, 2002 and state:

(a) whether the new drug policy would help to bring in new investments;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how the common man would derive benefit out of this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Pharmaceutical Policy-2002 provides that foreign investment upto 100% will be permitted, subject to stipulations laid down from time to time in the Industrial Policy, through the automatic route in the case of all bulk drugs cleared by Drug Controller General (India), all their intermediates and formulations except in the case of bulk drugs produced by the use of recombinant DNA technology, bulk drugs requiring in-vivo use of nucleic acids as the active principles and specific cell/tissue targeted formulations. This has been done with a view to further liberalising the foreign direct investment regime. The main objectives of this Policy are, *inter alia*, ensuring abundant availability at reasonable prices within the country of good quality essential pharmaceuticals of mass consumption and strengthening the indigenous capability for cost effective quality production.

Quality test of drugs

†3352. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the existing arrangement for conducting quality test of drugs at factory-level manufactured by the drug manufacturing companies;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.